GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:352
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2002
FOREIGN MINISTER VISIT TO SRI LANKA
M.V.V.S MURTHI;SHYAMA SINGH

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he paid a visit to Sri Lanka recently and held discussions with Sri Lankan leaders on several important issues;

(b) if so, the details thereof, issue-wise;

(c) the outcome thereof;

(d) whether the issue of extradition of LTTE Chief was also discussed; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN ANSWER TO PARTS (b) to (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 352 FOR ANS ON 07.08.2002 REGARDING FOREIGN MINISTER VISIT TO SRI LANKA

1. Minister of External Affairs (EAM) visited Sri Lanka on July 11-12, 2002. He held wide ranging discussions with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka. He also called on the President of Sri Lanka

2. During discussions, EAM reiterated India`s commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and to the restoration of a lasting peace through a peaceful, negotiated settlement meeting the just aspirations of all elements of Sri Lankan society. He reaffirmed India`s support to the measures taken by the Government of Sri Lanka for the peace process.

3. The two sides agreed that global terrorism is a threat to international peace and security that cannot be justified on any grounds, whether political, ethnic, religious, social or economic and stressed their commitment to support all global initiatives to eradicate this evil phenomenon.

4. In the realm of economic relations, the Foreign Ministers discussed the progress made in the expeditious resolution of outstanding issues relating to tea, garments and cement under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) at the recent meeting of senior officials held in Colombo, July 4-5, 2002. They agreed that more needs to be done to exploit the vast potential that exists for enlarging economic co-operation beyond the FTA.

5. Government of India extends assistance to Government of Sri Lanka in various areas. During his visit EAM announced

(i) that the previously agreed softening of terms applicable to the second and third tranches of the Line of Credit of US$ 100 million extended to Sri Lanka would also apply to the unutilised portion of the first tranche i.e. 15 years repayment period at fixed LIBOR with 5 years grace period;

(ii) GOI`s contribution of US$ 7.5 million to set up an India Cancer Centre in Colombo.

(iii) EAM agreed to examine the suggestion for assistance for restructuring in the railway sector.

6. A formal request for the extradition of Shri V. Prabhakaran, leader of the LTTE was made to the Government of Sri Lanka in June 1995. The issue is discussed with the Government of Sri Lanka from time to time and they have been made fully aware of our position. The Government of Sri Lanka have informed us that the request is receiving their due consideration and that the extradition, if agreed to, would have to await completion of trial and legal processes in Sri Lanka.